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INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN ENGLISH, A REPORT TO THE PACIFIC COAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE (SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 2, 1968).

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MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE ENGLISH PROFESSION, SPECIFICALLY THE PH.D. AND THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS, ARE ALREADY BEING EXPOSED BY DON CAMERON ALLEN'S STUDY, "THE PH.D. IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE," AND BY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THOMAS WILCOX'S "NATIONAL STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH PROGRAMS." THE AVAILABILITY OF STUDIES SUCH AS THESE AS WELL AS THE DEBATE WHICH THEY EVOKE CAN LEAD TO CHANGES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXCHANGE OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND VIGOROUS DEBATE ABOUT THE PH.D. WHICH TOOK PLACE IN 1966 AND 1967 ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY OF THE CHANGES ALREADY MADE AND BEING PLANNED. FOR THE TEACHER OR GRADUATE STUDENT WHO IS INTERESTED AND WANTS TO KEEP UP WITH BURGEONING AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION, THE ENGLISH PROFESSION HAS INITIATED TWO PROJECTS. FIRST, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) CLEARINGHOUSE EVALUATES, PREPARES, AND DISSEMINATES INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AT ALL LEVELS, IDENTIFIES CRITICAL ISSUES AND GENERATES RESEARCH ON AND DISCUSSION OF THEM. SECOND, THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, THE CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS, AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, WHICH COLLECT THE INFORMATION FOR ENGLISH ERIC, HAVE MADE PLANS TO PRODUCE CUMULATIVE, INTEGRATED, AND COMPUTERIZED BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY BEGINNING IN 1970. (BN)

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# INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN ENGLISH

BY Michael F. Shugrue

A REPORT TO THE PACIFIC COAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 2 MARCH 1968

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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I CANNOT THANK MESSRS. DANIELSON AND SNEPP AND ALL OF THE REST OF YOU ENOUGH FOR RESCUING ME FROM THE SNOWBANKS WHICH HAVE REPLACED GARBAGE AS THE PRINCIPAL IMPEDIMENT TO THE HAPPY LIFE IN NEW YORK CITY. IF THE SNOWFALL DOES, AT LEAST, SOFTEN THE LINES OF THAT HECTIC METROPOLIS, THE GARBAGE--100,000 TONS OF IT--ADDED COLOR AND A CERTAIN SPICE TO A CITY WHICH TURNS TO GREY EARLY IN OCTOBER AND ESCAPES FROM SLATE SKIES AND SOOT ONLY IN THE LATER HOURS OF APRIL. THE FORMIDABLE QUANTITIES OF REFUSE, STACKED HIGH ALONG SIDEWALKS AND ALLEYS, GAVE OUR CITIZENS A NEW TOPIC OF CONVERSATION, A NEW PROBLEM ABOUT WHICH TO WORRY, NEW STATISTICS TO MEMORIZE ABOUT THE RATE OF ACCUMULATION AND THE COST OF SETTLEMENT. THE COLD AND SNOW, MORE FAMILIAR VISITORS, RETURN NEW YORKERS TO THE SHELL OF INDIFFERENCE AND EVEN APPARENT HOSTILITY WHICH THEY ACCEPT AS A FACT OF LIFE IN THE AMERICAN CITY. A LINGUIST COULD ALMOST STRETCH THE POINT FAR ENOUGH TO SAY THAT TONS OF GARBAGE DID MORE TO STIMULATE THE LINGUISTIC GROWTH OF THE AVERAGE NEW YORKER THAN ANYTHING SINCE THE STRIKE OF TEACHERS LAST FALL WHICH KEPT A MILLION STUDENTS ON HOLIDAY LONG AFTER THEIR PARENTS HAD WISHED TO RETURN THEIR YOUNGSTERS TO TEACHERS AND CLASSROOMS, AND SET AN UNHAPPY PATTERN WHICH IS NOW AFFECTING BOTH CALIFORNIA AND FLORIDA.

I COULD NOT HELP COMPARING THE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE LED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH ENGLISH ERIC AND THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO BEGIN PLANNING GIGANTIC INTEGRATED PEDAGOGICAL AND SCHOLARLY BIBLIOGRAPHIES TO THOSE WHICH NEW YORK FACED AS TONS OF GARBAGE PILED ON THE STREETS. WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THE SORTING, COLLECTION, AND DISSEMINATION OF A VARIETY OF OBJECTS AND SERVICES. WE EXPECT GARBAGE TO BE HAULED, PHONES TO RING, ELECTRICITY TO CARRY CURRENT TO HOWEVER MANY HOMES REQUIRE IT AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT. WHEN THE SUBWAYS AND BUSES STOPPED RUNNING AND THE ELECTRICITY CEASED TO FLOW IN POOR, BELEAGURED NEW YORK, ITS LONG-SUFFERING INHABITANTS AGAIN REACTED TO THE INTERRUPTION OF THE NORMAL SORTING AND DISSEMINATING FEATURES OF CITY LIFE BY STARTING TO TALK WITH ONE ANOTHER, TO BE COURTEOUS, TO LAUGH AT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF COMBATING CITY LIFE.

I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS OF THE CITIES SHOULD BE STIMULATED BY PROVOKING NATURAL AND OTHER DISASTERS, BUT THAT IN ORDINARY LIFE

WE ASSUME THE EXISTENCE OF AND SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED AND SOPHISTICATED SERVICES TO WHICH WE AS TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ARE NOT ACCUSTOMED IN OUR INTELLECTUAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES.

--AS COLLEGE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH WE HAVE MUCH IN COMMON, BUT AS A PROFESSION WE HAVE STILL SHARED TOO FEW EXPERIENCES WITH COLLEAGUES AT EVERY LEVELS OF INSTRUCTION AND IN EVERY PART OF THE U.S. OFTEN WHAT WE SHARE AS COLLEGE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, IN FACT TURNS OUT, ONCE THE FACTS HAVE BEEN GATHERED AND EVALUATED, TO BE UNTRUE. I AM SURE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MORE MYTHS ABOUND ABOUT THE MAGICAL QUALITIES OF THE PHD IN ENGLISH THAN ABOUT ANY OTHER PHASE OF OUR PROFESSIONAL LIVES. DON CAMERON ALLEN, OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, SET OUT TO DISSPELL THE MYTHS IN 1966 BY EXAMINING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD IN ALL 120 UNIVERSITIES OFFERING THE DEGREE AND THE CAREERS OF ALL 3000 OF THE PHD's IN THE UNITED STATES WHO HAD GRADUATED BETWEEN 1955 AND 1965. HIS RESULTS, WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED ON I APRIL IN A WITTY VOLUME ENTITLED <u>THE PHD IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE</u>, SUPPORT THE CONVICTION PRIVATELY EXPRESSED ON MANY UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED BY MANY JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES THAT THE PHD IN ENGLISH MAY BE THE LEAST SUITABLE COLLEGE TEACHER ONE COULD HOPE TO FIND, THE PROVERBIAL HORSE DESIGNED BY A DOCTORAL COMMITTEE WHICH EMERGES AS A CAMEL. BECAUSE ALL PHD's CHANNEL THROUGH THE SMALL NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES OFFERING THE DOCTORATE, THEY THEMSELVES TEND TO PERPETUATE THE ASSUMPTION THAT "PUBLISH OR PERISH" IS A NORMAL STATE OF LIFE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THAT TEACHING, IF IT IS TO BE THOUGHT ABOUT AT ALL, SHOULD NEVER BE THOUGHT ABOUT DURING ONE'S RESEARCH HOURS. HOW MANY SMALL, GOOD COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS AROUND THE UNITED STATES, I WONDER, STILL EXPECT TO ATTRACT PHD's FROM THE SMALL POOL OF ABOUT 500 AVAILABLE EACH YEAR AND STILL THINK THAT PROMOTIONS CAN BE BASED UPON SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY? PROFESSOR ALLEN DISCOVERED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT DESPITE ALL THE TALK ABOUT PUBLICATION, FORTY PER CENT OF ALL THE GRADUATES OVER AN ENTIRE DECADE HAD PUBLISHED <u>NOTHING AT ALL</u> -- NOT EVEN AN ARTICLE SQUEEZED FROM THE DRY HUSK OF A DISSERTATION. HE DISCOVERED, FURTHERMORE, THAT OVER THIRTY PER CENT OF THOSE WHO TOOK THE DEGREE HAD NO TEACHING EXPERIENCE WHILE

IN GRADUATE SCHOOL AND NO OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ANY OF THE TECHNIQUES OR STRATEGIES OF TEACHING--ALTHOUGH THEY WERE BEING TRAINED TO BE COLLEGE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. HIS STUDY AND FIVE NATIONAL MEETINGS INVOLVING THE CHAIRMAN OF EVERY PHD-GRANTING DEPARTMENT IN THE COUNTRY HAVE LED TO FIFTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH GIVE PROMISE THAT THE PHD IN ENGLISH MAY ONE-DAY BE QUALIFIED TO TEACH COLLEGE ENGLISH IN A JUNIOR OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE WHICH BELIEVES IN EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 1967, TEN UNIVERSITIES HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN THEIR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS WHICH REFLECT THE ALLEN RECOMMENDATIONS. THE ELIMINATION OF A SECOND OR THIRD FOREIGN LANGUAGE, A REASONABLE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND HUMANELY POSSIBLE DISSERTATION, AND SUPERVISED TEACHING ARE THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF NEW PROGRAMS AT OREGON, INDIANA, AND NEW MEXICO, TO NAME ONLY THREE. IN ADDITION, THE ALLEN REPORT, PERHAPS THE MOST WIDELY-CIRCULATED SET OF GALLEYS AND PAGE PROOFS I HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED, HAS HELPED SPUR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO PREPARE COLLEGE TEACHERS FOR THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE, THE FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE, AND EVEN FOR THE UNIVERSITIES. ONE THINKS IMMEDIATELY OF THE NEW PROGRAMS AT TENNESSEE, NEBRASKA, CARNEGIE-MELLON, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.

WE AT THE MLA BELIEVE THAT THE EXCHANGE OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION AND THE FREQUENTLY VIGOROUS DEBATE ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE PHD WHICH TOOK PLACE AROUND THE COUNTRY IN 1966 AND 1967 ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY OF THE CHANGES ALREADY MADE, BEING PLANNED, AND SURELY TO BE PLANNED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. DON ALLEN's FACTS HAVE ALREADY MADE OLD SHIBBELETHS DISAPPEAR AND LITERALLY FORCED GRADUATE CHAIRMEN TO REASSESS THEIR ALL-TOO-TRADITIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS.

THOMAS WILCOX, TOO, IS DOING SOME PRELIMINARY SHAKING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. HIS "NATIONAL STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH PROGRAMS," WHICH DESCRIBES THE CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH IN THE FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE AROUND THE COUNTRY, WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED UNTIL 1969, BUT THE FIRST FACTS WHICH HAVE TRICKLED OUT TO THE PROFESSION--THE FIRST HARD-CORE DATA ON COLLEGE ENGLISH--PROMISE DEBATE, REAPPRAISAL, AND--ONE HOPES--PROGRESS. ALTHOUGH THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION IS MUCH TOO FOND THESE DAYS OF THE TWO WORDS BOLD AND INNOVATIVE; THE JARGON THEY REPRESENT TO MOST COLLEGE PROFESSORS OF ENGLISH IS

NOT GOING TO PROTECT THE TYPICAL FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE FROM THE IMPLIED CRITICISMS OF SIMPLE FACTS, MUCH LESS FROM THE INTERPRETATION OF THOSE FACTS WHICH WILCOX WILL INEVITABLY MAKE. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME THREE-QUARTERS OF ALL THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS ANNOUNCE THAT THEY PREPARE ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR THE SCHOOLS, BUT ONLY ABOUT HALF THAT NUMBER HAVE ANY ARTICULATION PROGRAMS WITH ANY SCHOOLS OF ANY KIND, THEN TEACHER PREPARATION IN OUR COUNTRY NEEDS A SERIOUS REEXAMINATION.

THE YOUNG PHD, WHO HEARS MUCH ABOUT THE NINE-HOUR TEACHING LOAD, SOMETIMES IGNORANTLY TURNS UP HIS NOSE AT TWELVE HOURS OF TEACHING, MUCH LESS FIFTEEN. WILCOX DEMONSTRATES THAT FULLY HALF OF THE FOUR-YEAR DEPARTMENTS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE A TWELVE HOUR LOAD AND THAT FIFTEEN PERCENT MORE STILL REQUIRE FIFTEEN HOURS OF TEACHING. THE NCTE GUIDELINES ON THE LOADS OF THE COLLEGE TEACHER, WHICH SPECIFY NINE HOURS, ARE EXEMPLARY GOALS, BUT AN ACTUALITY IN 1967 IN ONLY ABOUT TWENTY PERCENT OF THE FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MATTER OF IDEAL TEACHING LOAD IN THE JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEEDS FACTUAL STUDY AS SURELY AS LOADS AT OTHER LEVELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION NEEDED EXAMINATION. THE STUDY OF TEACHING LOADS IN THE JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE WILL HELP, FIRST OF ALL, TO DESCRIBE THE STATE OF OUR PROFESSION, TO INFORM FACULTY FIGHTING FOR BETTER TEACHING LOADS AND CONDITIONS, TO HELP THE COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION SET REALISTIC GOALS, AND TO ENABLE IT TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST THE OCCASIONAL CONDESCENSION OF THE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY FACULTY WHO IS, IN FACT, TEACHING AS MANY HOURS A WEEK AND PROBABLY NOT TEACHING THEM AS WELL.

THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON ENGLISH IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE HAVE BECOME EFFECTIVE WAYS TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION, AS HAVE THE NATIONAL MEETINGS OF THE MLA, NCTE, AAJC, THE FOUR C's, CEE, AND THE REGIONAL MLA's. BUT WHO CAN BE EVERYWHERE TO KEEP IN TOUCH? PERHAPS THE ONLY PROFESSIONAL SUBJECT WHICH HAS REACHED EVERY MEETING AT EVERY LEVEL IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER IN THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN THE ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION STUDY, WHICH NELSON FRANCIS OF BROWN UNIVERSITY DUBBED "THE OLDEST CONTINUOUS FLOATING CONFERENCE IN AMERICA." THAT VERY PROCESS OF DISCUSSION, REVISION, EXPLICATION, AND EXPLANATION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

OF ENGLISH FOR THE SCHOOLS BROUGHT THE STUDY TO THE PROFESSION--BUT AT A COST OF NEARLY $200,000.00 AND A GRAND TOTAL OF MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION MILES OF TRAVEL BY THE STAFF AND ADVISORY BOARD IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS. WHEN THE GUIDELINES APPEARED IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE MLA AND NCTE LAST FALL, 150,000 TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE RECOMMENDATIONS. NOW, TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF SATURATION, THE APRIL ISSUE OF THE NCTE's ENGLISH JOURNAL, WHICH WILL BE DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE STUDY, WILL INCLUDE CLASSIC STATEMENTS ABOUT TEACHER PREPARATION, THR FIRST AUTHORITATIVE HISTORY OF TEACHER PREPARATION IN ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES (BY ALFRED GROMMON OF STANFORD), AND A VARIETY OF OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY AND SUPPORTING STATEMENTS.

EVEN THEN, MANY TEACHERS WILL REMAIN UNINFORMED AND MANY MORE UNMOVED BY WHAT THEY LEARN. SOME TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, BURIED UNDER THEMES, UNABLE EVEN TO BROWSE THROUGH THE MOUNDS OF JOURNALS, BOOKS, AND ADS WHICH FILL THEIR MAILBOXES, WILL NEVER, EVEN WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS, LEARN MUCH ABOUT NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH. MANY TEACHERS HAVE STILL NOT READ, FOR EXAMPLE, EITHER OF THE CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT BOOKS ON THE DARTMOUTH SEMINAR OF 1966 OR STUDIED THE PRODUCTS OF THE CURRICULUM STUDY AND DEMONSTRATION CENTERS.

EVEN ON THE PRACTICAL LEVEL OF FINDING POSITIONS, MANY COLLEGE TEACHERS HAVE BEEN IN THE DARK UNTIL VERY RECENTLY. NOW, THE ASSOCIATION OF DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH, WHICH REPRESENTS THE CHAIRMEN OF DEPARTMENTS IN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES, ISSUES A LIST THREE TIMES EACH YEAR OF VACANCIES AROUND THE UNITED STATES. SINCE NOVEMBER, FOR EXAMPLE, NEARLY FIVE HUNDRED INSTITUTIONS HAVE LISTED A THOUSAND COLLEGE TEACHING POSITIONS IN ENGLISH. IN THESE LISTS THE PROFESSION HAS FOUND AN INEXPENSIVE WAY TO ACQUAINT APPLICANTS WITH OPPORTUNITIES. WHEN THE ADE, LEARNED, TOO, THAT NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED NEW CHAIRMEN TAKE OVER DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH EACH YEAR, IT DECIDED TO HELP THEM BECOME EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS--A FULLTIME JOB THESE DAYS--BY SETTING UP SPECIAL SEMINARS WHICH OUTLINE DIRECTIONS IN THE PROFESSION, TEACHING AND RECRUITING CONDITIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY, UNION PRESSURES, AND THE DEPARTMENT's RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION INTO A WEEK OF CONCENTRATED

DISCUSSION. IN 1968, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SEMINAR WILL BE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. WE HOPE TO COME WEST THE NEXT YEAR. YOU WILL BE AMUSED AND PROBABLY NOT STARTLED TO LEARN THAT SOME CHAIRMEN FROM FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES WHO ATTEND THESE MEETINGS FIND OUT THE JUNIOR COLLEGE EXISTS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THERE ARE OTHER KINDS OF INFORMATION I WISH MY COLLEGE COLLEAGUES COULD HAVE. I CAN ASSUME THAT THE STUDENTS WHO STEP INTO THE CONFERENCE ROOM AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY TO TAKE THE ORAL EXAMINATIONS FOR THE DOCTORATE WILL HAVE READ <u>THE FAERIE QUEENE</u>, <u>PARADISE LOST</u>, <u>DON JUAN</u>, AND <u>THE MILL ON THE FLOSS</u>. I CANNOT ASSUME THAT THEY WILL KNOW MUCH, IF ANYTHING, ABOUT THE NEW GRAMMARS, NEW RHETORICS, OR ABOUT NEW MEDIA. IF I ASK FOR THE NAME OF FOUR CRITICAL BOOKS ABOUT THE MAJOR EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NOVELISTS, I CAN EXPECT THE STUDENT TO RATTLE OFF SUCH A LIST MECHANICALLY. IF I ASK HIM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WHETHER DEFOE REALLY INVENTED THE NOTION OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE IN HIS <u>ESSAY UPON PROJECTS</u> (1697) AND THE <u>AUGUSTA TRIUMPHANS</u> (1728), WHETHER BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE's ATTACK ON LATIN GRAMMAR IN <u>AN ESSAY UPON CHARITY SCHOOLS</u> (1723) HAS ANY BEARING ON TRENDS IN SCHOOL LINGUISTIC PROGRAMS, OR WHETHER DR. JOHNSON KNEW WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT WHEN HE CRITICIZED THE LECTURE METHOD, I CAN EXPECT A SOMEWHAT STUNNED SILENCE. TO GO SO FAR AS TO ASK ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF JEAN PIAGET, JEROME BRUNER, OR NORTHROP FRYE ON THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM SINCE 1958 WOULD BE A HERESY MY COLLEAGUES WOULD NOT EASILY FORGIVE--MUCH LESS THE CANDIDATE. AND YET, I BELIEVE THAT WHAT GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO EXPECT TO BECOME COLLEGE TEACHERS LEARN SHOULD HAVE BOTH HUMANE AND PRACTICAL VALUE, HUMANE BECAUSE OUR SUBJECT IS A MEASURE OF SANITY IN A MATERIALISTIC TECHNOCRATIC WORLD, PRACTICAL BECAUSE WE ARE TRAINING TEACHERS WHO MUST PREPARE CURRICULUM AND CONDUCT CLASSES.

BUT HOW, IN A WORLD FLOODED WITH RESEARCH, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND THE PRINTED WORD, CAN THE STUDENT PREPARING TO TEACH OR THE TEACHER IN SERVICE KEEP PACE WITH CHANGES IN THE FIELD OF ENGLISH? THE ENGLISH PROFESSION HAS ASKED ITSELF THAT QUESTION AND INITIATED TWO PROJECTS WHICH WILL HELP THE GRADUATE STUDENT <u>IN A PROPER DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATE</u> AND THE TEACHER <u>REALLY INTERESTED IN ENGLISH</u> AND IN

TEACHING TO KEEP UP.

A YEAR AGO KENNETH MILDENBERGER OF THE MLA OBSERVED THAT IF ANYONE PLUGGED IN THE FEDERALLY SUPPORTED ERIC SYSTEM, HE'D BLOW EVERY FUSE IN AMERICA TRYING TO GET ANY INFORMATION. I MYSELF BELIEVED THAT WE <u>COULD</u> BE DESTINED TO HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF UNUSABLE, INSIGNIFICANT RESEARCH REPORTS AND CURRICULUM GUIDES IN ENGLISH EVER ASSEMBLED. THE FIRST YEAR IS FORTUNATELY THE WORST. INFORMATION RETRIEVAL CAME LATE TO ENGLISH BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF THE FIELD AND THE NEED TO DEFINE WHAT THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER CLEARINGHOUSES COULD ACCOMPLISH FOR THE TEACHER. NOW, AS NCTE COLLECTS RESEARCH REPORTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO ENGLISH FROM K-12 AND THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS; AS CAL FOCUSES ON APPLIED LINGUISTICS, ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES AND FOR SPEAKERS OF NONSTANDARD ENGLISH; AND AS THE MLA GATHERS, EVALUATES, AND PREPARES TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, THE JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE, AND ABOUT THE PREPARATION OF COLLEGE TEACHERS, THE PROSPECTS FOR A USEFUL, RELEVANT ERIC ARE IMMEASURABLY GREATER. <u>WE</u> HAVE LEARNED THAT ERIC CAN HELP US TURN THE ATTENTION OF COLLEGE PROFESSORS OF ENGLISH TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND TO THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR THE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BY FORCING THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF AND SWALLOW THE FACTS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT ERIC CAN GENERATE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION--WE ARE NOW, FOR EXAMPLE, COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT NEW GRADUATE PROGRAMS WHICH EMPHASIZE TEACHING, ABOUT SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR CREATIVE WRITERS, ABOUT COOPERATIVE PROJECTS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND JUNIOR COLLEGES. ONCE THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, IT CAN BECOME THE STUDY GUIDES FOR DOZENS OF DEPARTMENTS NOW PREPARING TO MAKE CHANGES IN THEIR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE CURRICULUMS. IF ERIC IS USEFUL, IT IS USEFUL BECAUSE IT BREAKS DOWN THE INSULARITY OF OUR PROFESSION. WE HAVE LEARNED, TOO, THAT ERIC CAN HELP TO IDENTIFY CRITICAL ISSUES WHICH NEED THE ATTENTION OF THE PROFESSION. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT ERIC, PARTICULARLY IN FUTURE YEARS, CAN BECOME THE GREAT REPOSITORY. . .

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, A REPOSITORY WHICH WILL MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE TEACHER AND STUDENT NOT ONLY INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENTS BUT "STATE OF THE ART" PAPERS WHICH REGULARLY REVIEW THE SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH AND WRITING IN AN AREA SUCH AS REMEDIAL WRITING PROGRAMS IN THE FRESHMAN YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT REMEDIAL PROGRAMS FROM ELIZABETH McPHERSON. FILL IT OUT; WE'LL PRINT IT.

AS MLA, CAL, AND NCTE BEGAN TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION NETWORK, THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THEY TOGETHER MUST FIND WAYS TO HELP THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER OR SCHOLAR USE THE NETWORK EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY. AS A RESULT, THE THREE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE NOW MADE PLANS TO PRODUCE A CUMULATIVE, INTEGRATED, COMPUTERIZED SCHOLARLY AND PEDAGOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH BEGINNING IN 1970. IF YOU HAVE HEFTED THE 1966 MLA INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY, YOU WILL KNOW THAT THE SIMPLE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR SCHOLARS WHICH BEGAN IN 1921 HAS BY NOW BECOME THE GODZILLA OF THE SCHOLARLY WORLD WITH MORE THAN 20,000 ITEMS LISTED FROM OVER 1500 JOURNALS AND HUNDREDS OF UNIVERSITY AND COMMERCIAL PRESSES. IT TAKES, IN FACT, EIGHTY-NINE BIBLIOGRAPHERS TO TRACK DOWN BOOKS AND ARTICLES AND TO AUTHENTICATE CITATIONS. WE ESTIMATE THAT A PEDAGOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH MIGHT RUN FIVE TO TEN TIMES THAT SIZE EACH YEAR.

OUR FIRST STEP TO MAKE WHAT THE TEACHER WANTS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE AND USEFUL HAS BEEN TO GET THE EDITORS OF HUNDREDS OF JOURNALS TO AGREE THAT EVERY ARTICLE OR ESSAY MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ABSTRACT OF APPROXIMATELY 200 WORDS. TO PUT ALL THESE ABSTRACTS IN A PRINTED SCHOLARLY BIBLIOGRAPHY IN 1970, HOWEVER, WOULD GIVE YOU AS A MEMBER OF MLA AN ISSUE OF PMLA APPROXIMATELY TWO FEET THICK. SIMPLY HAVING MORE TO READ IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THE ANSWER FOR THE USER.

OUR SECOND STEP, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR THE PHOTON PRINTOUT OF A COMPLETELY COMPUTERIZED BIBLIOGRAPHY. WITH SUCH A SYSTEM, YOU COULD REQUEST THE COMPUTER TO PRINT OUT FOR YOU ONLY CITATIONS FOR THOSE ARTICLES ON NEGRO LITERATURE OR REMEDIAL WRITING WHICH YOU MIGHT WANT TO READ; THEN TO PRINT OUT ABSTRACTS OF THOSE ITEMS OF INTEREST; AND FINALLY, USING CONTROL STATIONS HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM THE MASTER COMPUTER, TO PRINT OUT THE MOST RELEVANT ARTICLES THEMSELVES

OR TO PROVIDE THEM FOR YOU ON MICROFICHE, THOSE PLAYING-CARD SIZED STRIPS OF MICROFILM WHICH HOLD OVER SIXTY PAGES OF TEXT.

WITH NCTE AND CAL WE ARE BEGINNING TO COLLECT MATERIAL FOR A PEDAGOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY WHICH WILL BE CROSS-INDEXED WITH THE SCHOLARLY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CUMULATIVE AFTER 1970. IN 1973, LET US HOPE, YOU, HAVING INDICATED ON YOUR MLA OR NCTE MEMBERSHIP BLANK OR IN A PRIVATE INQUIRY THAT YOU ARE A COLLEGE TEACHER INTERESTED IN ENGLISH LITERATURE BEFORE 1800 WHICH MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR COLLEGE SOPHOMORES WHO WILL TRANSFER TO SENIOR COLLEGES, WILL RECEIVE AUTOMATICALLY ONLY THAT SET OF ABSTRACTS WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR YOU. YOUR CHOICE OF A FIELD WILL DIRECT THE COMPUTER TO A COMPLEX WINNOWING OF MATERIAL APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR CLASSES, MATERIAL BOTH SCHOLARLY AND PEDAGOGICAL. HUNDREDS OF OTHER KINDS OF INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH WILL ALSO BE QUICKLY RETRIEVABLE IN COMPACT FORM TO PROVIDE TEACHERS, CHAIRMEN, OR COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS WITH INFORMATION ESSENTIAL TO CURRICULUM PLANNING, TEACHER PREPARATION, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING CONDITIONS.

IF ALL THESE PLANS SEEM TO POINT TO AN EARLIER 1984, REMEMBER THAT ONCE THEY ARE IN OPERATION YOU WILL HAVE AT YOUR COMMAND THE EQUIVALENT OF A STAFF OF RESEARCH ASSISTANTS. DR. JOHNSON, WHO NEVER DREAMED OF SUCH PROJECTS (ALTHOUGH SWIFT MIGHT HAVE), KNEW THAT "KNOWLEDGE IS OF TWO KINDS: WE KNOW A SUBJECT OURSELVES, OR WE KNOW WHERE WE CAN FIND INFORMATION UPON IT."

THE DANGERS ARE ALL TOO APPARENT: INFORMATION AND RESEARCH ARE ONLY MEANS TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND BETTER TEACHING. THE RENAISSANCE IN WHICH A MAN KNEW EVERY ART AND SCIENCE GAVE WAY FINALLY TO THE AUGUSTAN AGE WHICH BEGAN THAT CATALOGUING OF MANKIND's ACTIVITIES WHICH THE 20th CENTURY HAS INCREASED ENORMOUSLY. WE CAN NO LONGER EVEN KEEP UP WITH OUR SPECIAL FIELDS, MUCH LESS WITH THE INTELLECTUAL AND AESTHETIC ACTIVITIES OF OUR CIVILIZATION. BUT IF WE, IN THE COMPUTER AGE, LEARN TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE OUR TEACHING MORE EFFECTIVE, WE SHALL NOT HAVE LOST THE HUMANISM OF OUR DISCIPLINE. RATHER, WE SHALL HAVE GAINED A FREEDOM TO CONVERSE. WITH ONE ANOTHER KNOWLEDGEABLY, TO REACH STUDENTS OF ALL ABILITIES AND MOTIVATIONS MORE EFFECTIVELY, AND TO STRENGTHEN THE PROFESSION OF ENGLISH.